• *Illustrated*

CHILD LIFE *of the* PENNSYLVANIA GERMANS

• Childhood Days:
Games and Sports
Folklore
Industry
School Days
Hallowe'en
Toys
Reminiscences

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"Little Known Facts About Bundling in the New World", &c.

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Privately Printed: THE AURAND PRESS, HARRISBURG, PENNA.

CHILD LIFE

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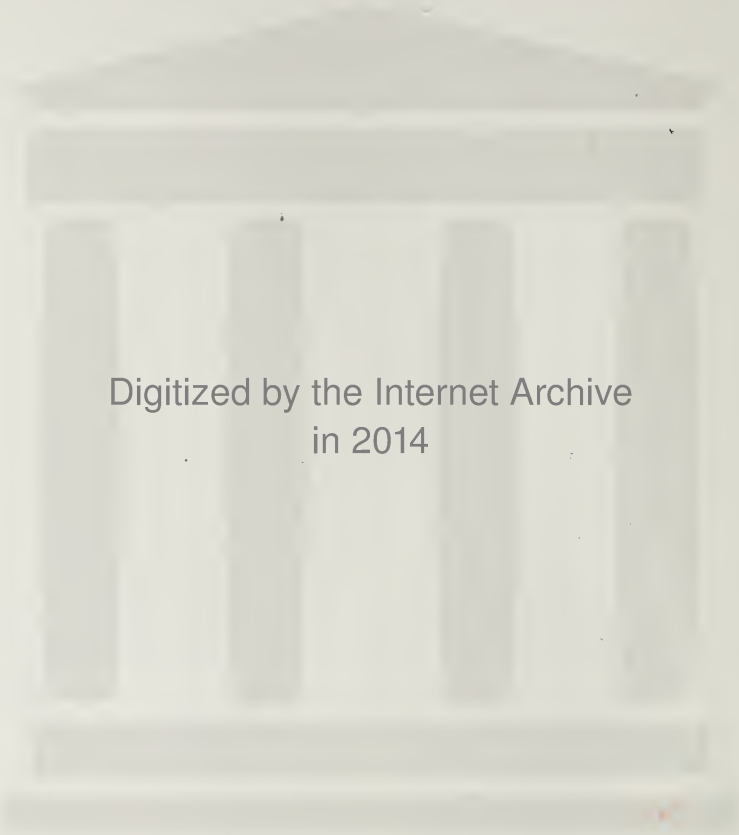

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THE BOYS AND GIRLS OF YESTERYEAR RUN OUR WORLD TODAY

Backward, turn backward
Oh time in thy flight;
Make me a boy again
Just for tonight.

"RETROSPECTION" is a word we seldom use—but a lot of us look back into the past just the same.

Life, being what it is, makes us think about the future by comparing the experiences of the past.

If there is anything in life today that is cheap—it is life itself! We don't say this in levity, but in all seriousness. Life should be well-ordered; some will say it is. Well, if it is, why are the newspapers the world over filled with the kind of news they carry?

It is just too sad a state of affairs when those who could do something about it are as unwilling to make a change as the many, many boys and girls who would put off the serious things until tomorrow when they could have done them already yesterday.

With just these few sober thoughts out of our system and now in yours, it our purpose to leave the subject of seriousness and go in "retrospect" to the years when impressions were first formed.

Some of them have come into full fruition; others have fallen by the way. In telling the story we've done about the best possible under the circumstances. Lives are too valuable to waste in pleasure alone; see if any good can be made to come from reading about the good old days of childhood?

Folk Beliefs of Olden Times.—Many beliefs and notions about new born babies have come down to us through the years. We will not attempt to justify these ideas—merely present a few of them for whatever they may be worth, remembering that they may, in many cases, go back several thousand years to their beginning, and thus show us how far we have come in our lore.

Some old time notions would have us believe that:

Children born on Emberdays or in January can see ghosts.

If born on certain days of the week, for instance on:

Sunday—saucy, or proud.
Wednesday—stupid, and short-lived.
Saturday—will have to do hard labor.

Zodiac influences are:

Libro—skin diseases; Leo—strong; Virgo—lucky; Crab—unlucky; Taurus—stubborn; Pisces—thirsty.

Cowlicks are good signs for newborn.

To rock an empty cradle means bad luck.

Wash children with their own urine to make them good looking.

Carry children upstairs first to have quick-witted ones, and to the garret for good singers and so it will go to heaven; downstairs so it will have a chance to rise in the world.

Whipped or tickled before it is a year old will cause a child to stammer; if his hair is cut too soon or if done by a pregnant woman he will be a weakling or will meet early death.

Teach a child to be right-handed—if you can—there are more of us!

Rain on the face makes freckles; dew removes them.

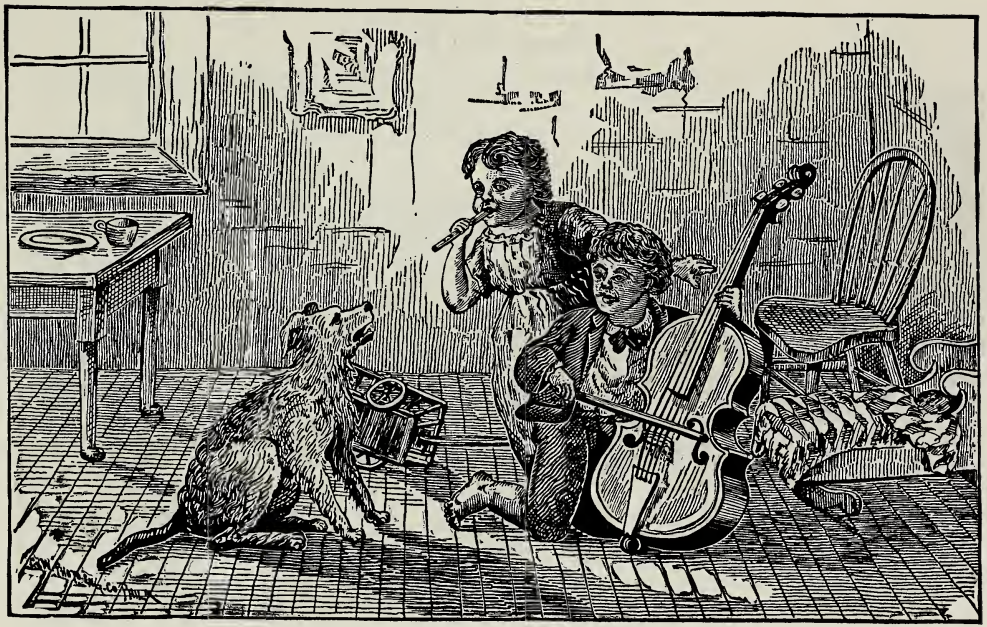
An old diaper should be put on a newborn infant—so he can stool and to prevent a sore backside.

If a child grunts lay it in a pig-trough.

Girls' Activities.—Young girls were what we might term "young mothers," for they did so many things around a home that mother did—except mate. They did hatchelling and carding, spinning and reeling, weaving and bleaching; they did cooking, canning and baking; they made cheese and butter, soap and candles; they worked in the garden and fields; they picked berries—also geese and ducks!

Girls were by nature more restricted in their outdoor life and their games suited their sex. They made up for it in "playing house" with miniature sets of dishes of pewter, tin or china; and, of course, they had their dolls to nurse and put to sleep, to dress and to spank, broken limbs to mend and eyes to be restored. Fancy dolls would lose their hair—only the poor old rag dolls could take the real beating.

It fell to their lot to do a lot of chores around the house, from making the beds and tidying up the bedrooms, to washing and drying dishes, going to the pantry, cellar or springhouse for butter or milk. They



Playtime

Old Time School

learned early to braid their hair, to cut patches just certain sizes to make patch quilts. They could plait rugs and do many things helpful around a busy home.

Outdoors Mostly for Boys.—Boys could find something to do almost anywhere—even if it was loafing. They could pick berries or fruit for fun or money; they could hunt nuts or honey; clay or horseradish; mint tea or tea-leaves and berries.

There were mountains to climb and sometimes the shafts or slopes in mines to explore. All along the route of travel there were stones to examine; snakes and bugs or other things to look for. Soft (soap) stones were carved and bugs dissected.

The whole world belonged to young boys. If a boy got hungry he could often times find food along the way, and if thirsty he just laid down along a stream or spring and lapped up the water he wanted.

If we haven't made extensive mention of hammock and swing it is because they are not yet forgotten. But we ought to recall the use of stilts which caused many a fall.

Meals. — Children should have had good-sized breakfasts if they followed in the footsteps of fathers who worked hard during the day. Breakfasts were usually the big meal—or another big one in the evening, when a boy really had a feeling of hunger.

Children's Toys. — If the reader wants to check on a list of playthings used by children long since, just conjure in your mind all of the things used by adults. From dishes and clothes to toys of the real things—furniture as well.

In the last century many of the toys were homemade, largely because they were cheapest, and somewhat because there wasn't a wholesale turnover as we know it today. Men and boys had a knack for making things in those days, too.

Take-offs of the Amish are especially contrasting today, but in all sections of the Dutch country small-sized replicas of the real thing were truly so.

Winter Activities for boys and girls would mean making a snow man, building forts with resulting snow ball battles; skating, coasting and sliding on

snow crusts, using dish pans, pieces of sheet-metal or roofing.

A boy could do a hundred different things a day if he wanted to. He could smoke corn silk or tobacco hidden some place where he wasn't likely to be found; he could go swimming, fishing or hunting — all of which might have been forbidden by his mother.

A boy could play "Buffalo Bill" or Indian, or be a "choo-choo" train. He had enough imagination to be any kind of animal he had ever heard about.

Picking cherries was a lot of fun—they were good eating, and it gave a boy a chance to be daring and go out on a limb further than would be safe.

Recollections of sucking at icicles in winter and catching fireflies (lightning-bugs) in summer never dim.

We were told not to go near the water during the "dog days" for fear of hives.

Visiting Beaus. — Youngsters were quite alert to their opportunities in many ways in the long, long ago. For instance, if they took a liking to a local girl many years older who had a visiting beau, it wasn't too expensive fifty years ago to pay off the "third party" with chocolate almonds!

In some homes a cord with a weight on the end might be run from a downstairs room, up through a crack in the low ceiling or through the heater or stove-pipe opening, and attached to the under part of the bed to be occupied by visitors, newly-weds or a member of the family—or for that matter, of the parents. There was seemingly no limit to the lengths some kids would go for fun.

Flirting. — Boys and girls, strange to each other, found means in all ages to communicate with each other and make mutual acquaintance. Notes were handed around in every conceivable manner, including those in school. Flirtations were conducted by the way girls wore their hair ribbons, by flowers and the postage stamp.

Transportation for boys and girls was provided first of all on the arms! Then piggy-back, carriage or wagon; bicycle, horses and ponies.

INDUSTRY AND THRIFT ARE GREAT GIFTS TO YOUNG FOLKS

Industry. — Early in our time light to medium weight industry existed in the country section. Boys and girls could spend hours watching the blacksmith shoe horses, make tires for wheels, hammer and twist out nice figures and stands; one could stand there and with the horse-tail hand-switch chase the flies from the horses.

In wagon and carriage factories the vehicles grew from raw materials, excepting for hubs which might be shipped in and represented the only "outside" work excluding iron, glass and curtains.

In more remote sections, a family might make its livelihood making barrel staves or heads and shingles. And then there were the large lumbering camps and saw mills, and the resulting planks, boards and slab-wood, mine-props, timber for bridges, ties, liquor wood and tan bark. Sawdust was used for fuel in numerous small manufacturing-plant boilers. Kids rode on the teams hauling such commodities, years on end.

Every one of the different types of operation mentioned above were interesting to behold.

One woodsman and his son came to the railroad one day with a heavy load of ties. When about to unload the young fellow saw the railroad company's new trespass notice for the first time, and in a disgusted tone of voice said to his father (translated): "Pop, we've got to take dese damn ties back home again; it says here on the pole:

'NOTICE'"

—and which he read to mean: "NO TIES."

During the summer months there were the gypsies or "creekers" who made baskets from willows found along the streams locally.

Driving Cattle. — For some extra spending money we used to "drive cattle" from town to pasture in the morning and back in the evening—more than a mile 'round trip—not a great distance, we'll allow, but the

rate of pay wasn't great either: the munificent sum of 2c per day. We happened to "work" for a town-owner of one of these bovines; farm kids fared even worse, for they got nothing for their trouble!

Once we saw a bloated cow, and the way she was treated by the farmer—a jab between the ribs with a hat-pin. We don't know what happened to the cow afterward, but we are told they usually die soon after such an "operation."

Printers. — Most printing shops had "printer's devils"—the boys who did all the dirty and odd jobs around the plant. It might take years until a none-too-apt boy could make the grade of printer. Tricks of the trade included that of showing all visitors the "type lice."

Apprentices were also required to go to the general store for left-handed monkey wrenches and 10c worth of white lamp-black. They would also be made to wash greasy and inky presses with soap and water!

Apprentices sometimes were known to throw away unused postage stamps that were moistened so much they wouldn't stick.

Old Coins, Stamps, Etc. — In early days in school we learned of the 1883 V-five-cent-piece without the word "cents." Some slickers milled the edges, bronzed the coin and passed it off for $5-gold pieces. Like many another youngster we collected old coins for a number of years—stamps and post cards, too.

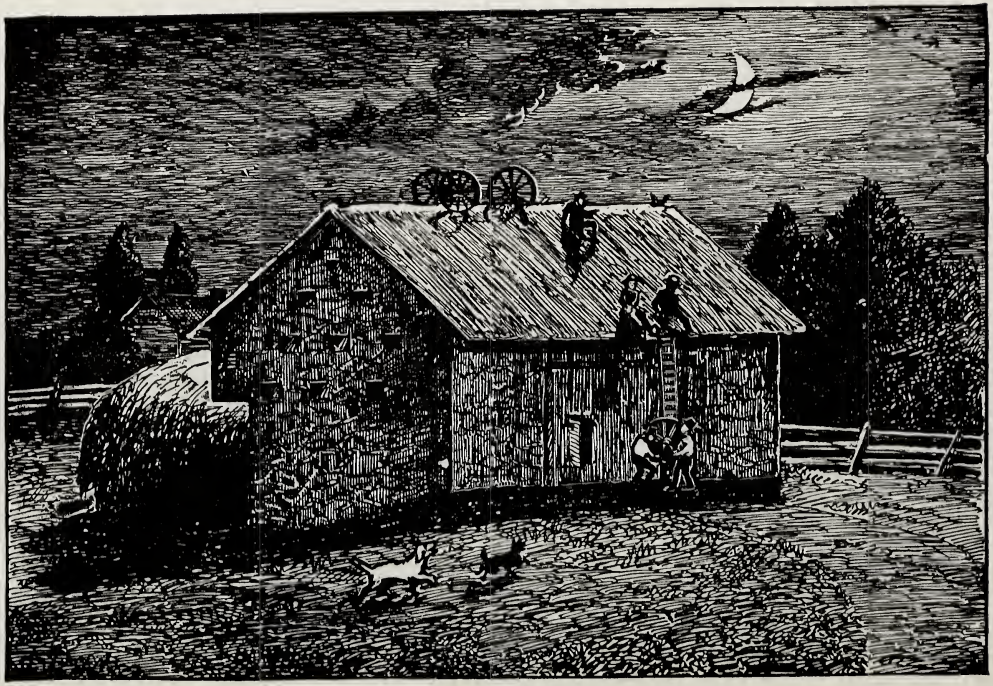
Too few boys took an interest in stamps half a century ago; had they developed such a hobby they would have been better men for it now. Today there are thousands of persons collecting old coins.

Jack Knives. — One of the most important possessions of a boy would be a knife—a barlow or jack-knife. With this he could whittle and fashion all day long, if he wanted to, just like his father, grandfathers and uncles.

A boy could easily turn his ability into a useful trade, and some few did. Many found the greatest use for a jack-knife was to whittle or notch furniture and planks they should have left alone.

Store benches inside, and the familiar plank seats

Recess



Hallowe'en

on the outside and all nearby poles, fence rails and trees testified to the pleasure that must have come to countless young and old—if they had a knife.

Trees along paths in the woods or on the way to fishing sites bore evidence to the "love" expressed by the cutting of initials of "lovers" from any age on up. Today the whittlers have given way to those who would write their notions on walls in all sorts of places.

Picket and board fences and gates were fair game for a boy loafer with a knife.

Many a piece of stone called soap-stone was reduced to grit or perhaps carved into a design.

Knives were thrown into walls or sides of barns or other buildings built of soft wood.

Games of throwing or spinning a knife with the blade half closed, so that if only the point of it stuck, the number of fingers one could get under it would count for so much; if it happened to land so that it formed a closed angle, it counted least; but if it landed flat on its back with the blade straight up it counted, as we recall it, ten times as much as the minimum—100 as against ten. This pastime helped while away many an hour in childhood days.

The man was but the boy grown up and both were well equipped for all kinds of activities with a knife because it served so many useful ends, as well as allowing either to work off nervousness by whittling, chewing tobacco and spitting frequently.

How else could a boy, man or a woman cut the eyes, nose, mouth and ears and scalp a pumpkin, but with a knife—one which they knew how to handle?

Daniel Webster stated that jack knives were the direct forerunners of the cotton-gin and many other American inventions.

Fishing, hunting, nutting—you just had to have a knife on the trip. Many articles used in the home and on the farm were laboriously worked into something worthwhile by the use of the knife.

Some of the prized possessions in many homes were wooden bowls shaped and whittled by some one skilled at such work. Hinges, bolts and latches are

also recalled. Gourds and cocoanut drinking cups were fashioned with pocket knives.

Last but not least of the many things recalled about pocket knives was to close your fingers tightly around one you wanted to get rid of, like making a fist, and trade it on another, held in the same way—each trying to make the other fellow believe he was getting the best of a trade—called "hooey-ing!"

Musical Instruments.—Country and town boys had at least one or all of the following musical instruments: rib bones for rattling; a mouth-organ (harmonica) or a Jew's harp. An occasional "potato" was found among the gang.

Shortly after the coming of the gramaphone, and its wax records, we made a home recording of "Bill Bailey Won't You Please Come Home?"

The starting switch was snapped, the machine was started, and then, recalling that all records began with an announcement of the title, the company producing the record and the singer, we hurriedly queried the owner of the machine: "Johnny, shall I put my name to it; Johnny, shall I put my name to it?"

Twice with anxious voice the question was asked, and then on with the song. Ever after that as long as that record was whole, it started out with that same anxious question, and the plaintive appeal to old "Bill Bailey." But that same mistake never happened again.

YOUNG AMERICA PLAYED MANY KINDS OF OLD TIME GAMES

Sock Ball.—At school or country farm public sales there was the almost inevitable ball game in progress during most of the day. At school it occurred at recess or at noon; at sales it might go on for hours. In our time it was called "sock ball" or perhaps "schtubb balle."

The school yard in those days had very little space for playing town ball—the forerunner of base ball. Sock ball, favorite game for kids at sales, was played back of the barn or other suitable open space nearby;

the barnyard could be covered quickly with a little straw and made suitable for a playing field.

The ball might be one made up of a few rags, with a leather covering or of odd shape hurriedly tied with cord string to give it a fairly rounded shape and lending itself to easy throwing.

A team would consist of four players who took positions at the "four corners;" this was the offense team. The opposition team was of four who took positon inside the "ring" or "square." The object was for one of the boys on the corners to throw the ball so as to hit one of the inside group.

If the ball hit a "runner" or "dodger" he was "put out" or retired from play; and if the tosser missed he likewise was retired from play until but one survived from either team. If the tossers missed they eliminated themselves; while if they hit or socked all the inside players then a new round was started.

This went on for long stretches for sales would last from 9 or 10 in the morning sometimes until dark and kids had to do something; certainly they were not bidders at the sale. It was harmless sport and the game found many others who looked on when they were disinterested in what might be under the hammer in the house.

Base Ball, now a century old, was an attraction for players and spectators alike, and we have known them to walk miles, even over mountains, to see or play in a game.

Among "historical" games played was that of scalping Indians. It was just a few short years ago we learned that scalping was a custom as old as civilization itself. Its significance was that if no hair remained on the scalp lock the deceased could not be grasped firmly by the hair and pulled into heaven. Thus Indians tried to prevent enemies from going to the next world (their "happy hunting ground") and perhaps there give them further competition.

Games Played With Balls include foot ball, town ball, corner ball, barley ball or call ball.

Humming-Top.—It was wound round with string as other tops but it produced a musical hum.

There were also the "whip-top," started with both hands and whipped to a great speed.

Long ago there was also the "peg-top" which, on being spun, was taken up "sleep," as it is called, in wooden spoons or on the bare hand.

Marbles.—A game nearly every child knows about. Few of them now are familiar with the old Dutch or variegated marbles, seldom perfectly round.

Endurance Games might safely include "Crack-the-Whip" and "Leap-Frog." The former is pretty tough on the fellow who plays "caboose," especially if on a hillside where full play may be had.

"Prisoner's Base," "Puss in the Corner," "Follow the Leader" are all familiar. This latter game caused lots of youngsters to get into a peck of trouble and to get home late for supper or for bed.

"A bushel of wheat, a bushel of rye, whoever ain't ready, holler I" was part of the game called by some: "Warning;" "Hide and Seek" was the other name.

"Touch" or "Tag, You're It" was suitable for boys or girls of any age.

Archery.—As boys most of us made some sort of bow-and-arrow. Having had it in our history was incentive enough at least to try to make one and make it work.

The Kite was something we liked to play with if enough space was available.

Miscellaneous Games and Sports: "Blind-Man's Buff" known to most every one.

"Dick, Duck and Drake"—skipping flat stones or slate on creeks and ponds. When a stone strikes the water and rebounds once, it is a dick; twice, a duck; the third time, a drake.

"Swinging," "Tug-of-War," "Hop-Scotch," "See-Saw," "Hide and Seek," and "Whoop;" "Hop, Step and Jump" and "Dropping the 'Kerchief."

The Hoop.—Not every youngster had a nice smooth iron hoop but there was no excuse not to have at least a wooden one from an old cracker barrel. Hoops graded from a few inches to several feet in diameter.

The "Sling-Shot" and the "Pea-Shooter" are weapons nearly every country boy had and plenty of birds

and broken window panes testified to their destructive value.

The "Pop-Gun" was made from a piece of wood from which the pith had been removed. A rammer was made and a handle of proper length, having a shoulder to prevent it from going through the barrel. Place a moistened pellet into one end, push it with the rod to the other end; place a second pellet where the first was inserted, push that toward the opposite end and, if well made you have a good pop-gun.

Other interesting phases of a child's life should not be overlooked: the all-important never-entirely-empty cookie jar!

There were the little sail boats in the wash tub; checkers and jacks.

RECOLLECTIONS OF SCHOOL DAYS AND SOME OLD TIME PRANKS

Barring Out the Master (Teacher). — School days that paid "extra dividends" over and above that which was required to be learned were few and far between. There were in different sections of the Dutch country certain customs that are unknown to kids today; even the parents of most children school-bound these days know nothing about it—the "penning out of the teacher!"

More than a hundred years ago the English people celebrated the custom that was still practiced in central Pennsylvania in the present century which they then supposed was "now fallen into disuse," and soon to be "totally forgotten."

John Brand, in "Observations on Popular Antiquities," (London 1888), at page 36 says:

> Till within the last twenty or thirty years, it had been a custom, time out of mind, for the Scholars of the Free-School of Bromfield, about the beginning of Lent, or in the more expressive phraseology of the country, at Fasting's Even, **to bar out the master,** i. e., to depose and exclude him from his school, and keep him out for three days. During the period of this expulsion, the doors of the citadel, the school, were strongly barricaded within: and the Boys, who

defended it like a besieged city, were armed, in general, with bare-tree, or elder, pop-guns. The Master, meanwhile, made various efforts, both by force and stratagem, to regain his lost authority. If he succeeded, heavy tasks were imposed, and the business of the School was resumed and submitted to; but it more commonly happened that he was repulsed and defeated. After three days' siege, terms of capitulation were proposed by the Master and accepted by the Boys.

Pennsylvania Dutch youngsters of all ages and grades in rural and small town schools as late as 1900 observed the same customs the English writer thought were all but obsolete. Doors and windows were secured from within either before the teacher arrived in the morning, when the teacher left the room during recess, or at noon.

Shutters were closed and as there was generally but one or two teachers who would try to force an entrance there were any number of youngsters inside who could keep the teacher out as long as they desired —except for possibly one case. If the teacher could place a flat stone or broad plank on the chimney it might "gas" the kids out, if there happened to be a fire going in the stove at the time; or, if he agreed to supply candy and other desired edibles the teacher might reclaim his "kingdom."

While it is to be noted that the Dutch observed this custom in German settled counties in Pennsylvania there is little or no evidence that the descendants of the Scotch-Irish practiced it or that they even knew about it, according to investigations we made along these lines.

The older scholars were always the ring-leaders and it appears from some accounts that the custom was practiced in some sections on the morning of the day before Christmas, whereas our part in such affairs occurred on Shrove Tuesday.

Since both occasions were at a time when "goodies" could be had because they were in season we can understand reasons for the custom. From what we have been able to recall and to learn none were ever punished for such irregularities.

Changing trends in school life eliminated many old time practices. The youngest kids in school were keen

to take a part in all such sport although they sometimes got in the way when the battle was on to defend doors and shutters and windows.

Parents sometimes furnished extra food and drink to their children to see how long they could hold out, it being again the old, old story of custom surviving the times.

Today's school laws are too stringent to allow for such "innocent" pastimes, but not for fostering the ideas of "witches" and black cats and bats.

Bats and Witches are pretty nearly synonymous. If children learn anything about bats they usually grow up with that idea not only firmly fixed but adding still more incredulous beliefs in the habits of these creatures—and their doubles, the witches.

HALLOWE'EN A RELIGIOUS FESTIVE DAY THAT PACKS TROUBLE

Hallowe'en is a religious festivity. It is a day when all hell breaks loose after nightfall. For a day that represents something as far back in history as does this day, with all the celebrating we still do today, it seems hard to believe that it is all in fun, as some claim. The fact that some children are afraid and show definite signs of fear at Hallowe'en and at New Year's when fantastics appear, makes it seem only too true that a belief in witches still persists.

The public schools today play up the witch idea, but do you really think they should?

The devil himself is represented as one who causes much damage to mind and soul, and property too. But what "spirit-world thing" could do more damage to property than kids at Hallowe'en? The destruction, said to be all in fun, is not always measured in mere dollars and cents; too often persons are hurt as a result of obstacles placed in their way and by the removal of steps. Little witches or devils should bring about destruction only to their own immediate family —if it is just in fun!

"Tick-tack;" the water-bag and the stone or brick

carefully wrapped and bumped against a door are in the innocent class. So in throwing corn, but it is wasteful nevertheless.

The things children have in mind are perhaps no better displayed than at Hallowe'en when we see all kinds of words written on buildings and windows—words they do not learn at school, words considered obscene in polite society. Do they hear them at home?

In addition to removing steps and gates and upsetting outdoor privies the most difficult feat at Hallowe'en time was taking a wagon or buggy apart and pulling all of it up bit by bit and reassembling it on the barn roof. It would have cost a good bit of money to get men to do that kind of work, but for the Hallowe'en devils it was just a lot of fun. The owner had to get it down the best way he could, unless he learned the identity of the culprits.

An Unearthly Light. — A childish prank growing out of a lighted pumpkin is recalled. A gang fixed up such a pumpkin, attaching to it a pulley which they ran on a wire suspended from a tall monument to the entrance gate at a cemetery.

For several nights an "unearthly" light appeared in this cemetery, moving at various rates, times and with peculiar swaying motions, so as soon to cause alarm to people in the nearby community who could see this phenomenon.

It was called to the attention of a constable who said he wasn't afraid, and that he would investigate. He investigated, but nearly died from fright doing so.

It seems the kids who were pulling the lighted pumpkin upward from the lower end of the line, at the gate, would work on it as it suited them, but when the constable appeared the alarm was given to "let it ride" from the upper end, with "every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost."

Gathering speed as it rolled along, the "spirit light" smashed against the fence almost in the face of the constable who became frightened more and more in the few seconds it took to make the trip. The poor fellow just naturally passed out, and didn't know until sometime later what caused the unusual light.

Catching Elbedritches

Teasing

The Devil.—Provocative incidents in a young person's life during the latter part of the last century brought to their attention a series of pictures of all sorts depicting heaven and hell and pictures of his Satanic Majesty. One book* to reach many homes and brought to the attention of children of both sexes was impressive beyond all others.

This little book has pictures of the human heart in a series showing a pleasant face, surrounded with angels, progressing to one full of wrinkles, dark and polluted with the devil and his cohorts.

A child might be judged in those days by its own parents or neighbors on the basis of its looks—without regard to any organic trouble or however many worms may have been responsible. Children had every right in the world to be scared nearly to death at such pictures.

An old saying had it that "A child that picks his nose has worms."

The Devil and St. Medard. — An intensely interesting account of the "evil one" is "The History of the Devil," by Dr. Paul Carus, (Chicago 1900). In it is retold the story of what St. Medard did to Old Nick along the shores of the Red Sea. Old Nick was loaded down with a bag containing "a number of lost sinners. The saint took compassion on the poor souls and slit Satan's bag open, whereupon Old Nick's prisoners escaped." For any one interested in the actual triumph of saint or man over the devil, the illustration in the above book must give a great deal of satisfaction.

The story appeared in the "Ingoldsby Legends," and is accompanied by some verse on the subject. But since 1900 when the book first-mentioned appeared the illustration of the "lost sinners" escaping from Old Nick's pack has not been forgotten—as subtle an illustration as we have ever beheld.

Locks of Hair.—Very few old time families let the first cuttings of pretty locks of their children's hair

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* "Das Herz des Menschen" ("The Heart of Man"). It was to be had in English as well as German.

be thrown out as plain refuse. Locks of hair were most carefully preserved, quite often with ribbons, and placed nearly always in the Bible for safe-keeping. Mothers like to remember the sweet and beautiful golden hair as long as they live, and hold it quite sacred.

Sometimes when children have falling fits (epilepsy) hair may be cut from the ailing one, taken to a certain tree where, after boring a hole, placing some of the hair in it and plugging it shut, relief may soon be expected (?). Hair similarly placed may also be said to be good to spell-bind thieves and others.

NONE SO BLIND AS THOSE WHO DO NOT WANT TO SEE EVIL AT HOME

Good Behavior. — A great challenge to parents is to keep their children from doing the things they should not do. It is a smart parent indeed whose kids sooner or later are not involved in one or more of the following enumerated subjects which rational kids are inclined to do in the process of growing up and which all too often are imitative of the parents or some one the parents indulge:

Spitting at any one
Swearing (its against the law anyway)
Fooling around with guns and revolvers—dynamite caps or sticks—high-tension wires
Wetting or stooling in neighbors yards or private alleys
Throwing stones at property, animals or people
Teasing drunks, half-witted persons and animals
Criticizing the appearance, race, creed or language of another who may not be as fortunate as the critic "thinks he is"
Don't let children play with matches!

There isn't anything mentioned in the foregoing list that any sensible person would do and if children do these things then somebody at home is to blame.

"Saints" are not born—they are made by the church —long after they have gone to their reward. So don't

get the idea that only your child may have the "gift" of perfection and all others the mark of iniquity.

In looking over the situation in connection with the writing of this account we raise the question: What has happened to the hand that used to "rock the cradle?" Does it still "rule the world?" If so, why are the juvenile problems worsening?

Accepting a dare to stick your tongue against an iron fence or pump and other metal on extremely cold days has been the means of teaching many a boy that mother nature packs a decidedly stiff wallop at times. Is this not true with parents, learning all too late that they were the ones who begat the child, but that their influence and council was sadly lacking when and where it was needed most. Not only the children, but the parents too, reap what they sow!

Concerning Holidays there is a wealth of lore sufficient for a sizeable treatise. In the main youngsters looked forward to the coming of New Year's day (or Fantastic day), April first (All Fool's day), Shrove Tuesday (donut day and the day to pen the teacher out of school), Easter, Ascension day (to go fishing), Decoration day (to scatter flowers on the graves of war veterans), Hallowe'en (All Hallow's day—a day to raise the dickens), Thanksgiving and Christmas.

There is one other day to be added to the above list—the last day of school each spring.

Imitating Parents.—By the very nature of things children at play so often find clothing discarded by older members of the family. When little tots get into this array of fashion and suddenly burst into the presence of mother and her visitors there is a lot of fun. Sometimes it isn't just the right thing to do.

Most kids like to fool away time at play; few liked the Little Lord Fauntleroy stuff although there was an awful lot of lace, plush, velvet and corduroy for the boys and ginghams and calicos for the girls.

Club Houses.—Boys, like men, crave secrets and secret meeting places. So we find them meeting under tents, perhaps only some old carpet or burlap thrown over sticks or the washline. The club house may be of frame construction, built by the "little brothers"

themselves. Barns in town or country attract such meetings. Too often the members have been supplied with matches—results disastrous to life and property.

Playing Along Streams and Ponds. — Wading in shallow water was always a pleasant diversion. Aside from squeezing the thin and oozy mud and filth up through the toes, there was always a chance of finding some bit of junk worth salvaging or a stray duck or chicken egg.

Barefoot boys waded along streams, under bridges and buildings in search of adventure.

Fishing for minnows with a burlap net with sticks on the sides was most common; fish were caught, too.

There was clay for throwing or modeling.

Horse-radish (which we liked so much) could be found along some streams.

Cat-o'-nine tails dipped in kerosene and lighted made dandy lights for playing with at night.

Small sandstone pebbles and sand in clear spring water and a few pieces of galvanized pipe made "engineers" for great dams and reservoirs!

The writer never trapped rabbits or any of the other animals common in the country, but a lot of his buddies did; they also had their pigeons and other fancy poultry.

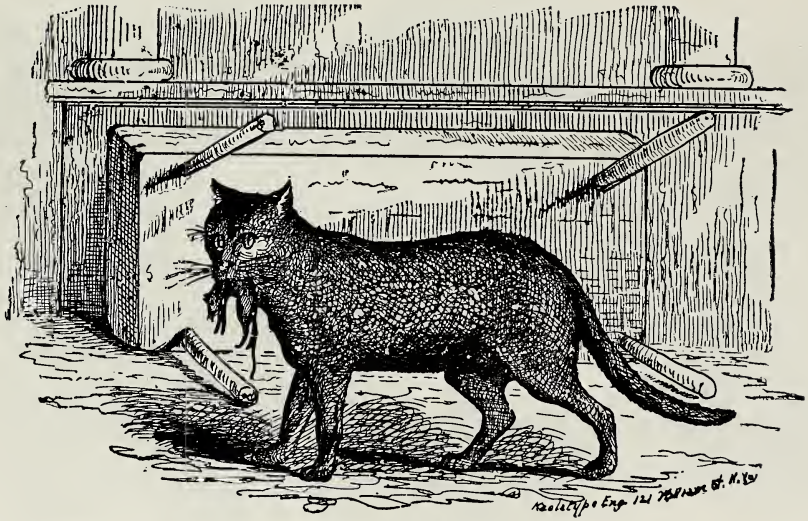
Chewing Gum substitute was found in chewing a good-sized mouthful of whole grains of wheat.

From Reeds and Willows were made odds and ends including whistles and pea-shooters. This makes us recall the pop-gun.

The House in the Tree.—Not only youngsters but older persons enjoyed playing in the trees. Whether it was normal fun or eccentric, tree climbing challenged men. A house in the trees made a nice place to rest on a summer's day or on Sunday.

In the late eighteen hundreds children played with pin-ball machines, checkers, jacks, dominos, hasenpeffer, flinch and Bible cards.

Teasing drunks, half-wits and animals was one of the meanest of boyish acts. We have seen "the fire fly" many times when the more or less helpless that we have mentioned were the butt of ridicule.



Cat and Mouse

Admiration

BOYS WILL BE BOYS, BUT IT WOULD BE BETTER IF THEY BEHAVED

Retrospection. — At meal time there was always a tendency that children might talk too much or be too noisy. Parents or older brothers or sisters could be depended on to remind them that "they should be seen, not heard."

It was fun to spell out words with letters from the alphabet soup or to match them with the letters on the edge of an alphabet plate.

Some kids liked the white of fried egg, and if one of the others liked the yolk there was little trouble from this direction. But if all the kids started yelling for the top crust of home-made bread it created a problem.

We never saw the time nor place where children were required to stand back of some adult's chair and there receive their portion of a meal in silence, and when through to leave at once. We have heard mention of it occurring a century ago, but probably not among the Pennsylvania Germans.

Awkwardness in the handling of a knife, fork and spoon is something that may easily follow a child all through life. There are easy ways to hold these "tools" but many youngsters are simply allowed to hold them any old way in the beginning and those "holds" continue through life.

There were many interesting things to watch in a kitchen. The preparation of many dishes, and if you will examine an old cook book many things will recall themselves to mind.

To watch anything made in deep fat coming to the proper color was one thing. "Licking the crock" —i. e., using a spoon but more generally the fingers to get the last of the sweetened cake batter from a mixing bowl, or chewing that part of a layer cake which adhered to the greased paper was something quite satisfying!

Popping corn or chestnuts, or slicing potatoes thin and "doing" them on the top of the stove.

To roll out and when dry, cutting the dough into strips for noodles and when cooked, sucking them rapidly into the mouth (until you got slapped for it).

Cooking new sweet corn, cutting it off for drying and trying to cut the length of the ear without a break!

Grinding coffee in the old grinder, clipping the coupons from the coffee bags and then getting your premiums; premiums were also obtained in each package of "oats."

Remember the mess the baby made and how you just snooped around to discover its sex while mother changed didies; then she had to wash the didies.

Then there was the mess the cat made; or the one the baby made and you discovered by him holding out his hand, and you said: "Pooh, bah!"

The frozen water pipes or the pump.

In those days the sweet chocolate bar was little known, so kids occasionally hacked off a chunk of baking chocolate. Of course it was bitter but it was forbidden, so the kids did it.

Remember the camphor bottle in the pantry or cellar-way? And the "sotz" (yeast) crock or jar—and if you ran out of yeast, you went to a neighbor and borrowed some.

Milk always turned sour in summer months during thunder showers and then is when you wanted sweet milk most of all.

A lot of things happened in the kitchen!

Some Interesting Recollections of the first year in school come to mind. One kid in the primary grade was already an accomplished chewer of tobacco—even during school hours. To get rid of spit outside was nothing; to get rid of it during school hours was something else. He couldn't spit on the floor nor in his ink well (he didn't have one).

The kid wore overalls as did many others in those days (and barefooted, too) and you will be very much surprised to learn that he simply pulled the bib of his overalls away from his chest and "p-fuit" right down there!

In the middle grade the teacher punished the kids

by putting corn or chalk in their mouths and had them stand on one foot, holding the large dictionary in one hand. 'T wasn't funny!

During these years a boy was likely for the first time to borrow a pipe from some older person for just one puff. Don't do it—it makes you sick as hell! Have your own pipe, if you must—don't borrow. We know!

The Pennsylvania German dialect was something all country boys and girls had to overcome (if they could) once they left home for the big world around them. It wasn't the easiest thing to overcome the "v."

What has happened to the boy who used to tie tin cans to the dog's tail; and to the pig tail which was always in demand at butchering time. A pint inserted in the thick end of the tail and bent so that it could be pinned on the coat tail of the teacher or preacher or some other person, was great sport in its day.

Children will go out of their way to walk or stand in water puddles, rather than walk a straight path and avoid them. Grown-ups are so much like kids.

Money Was Saved a penny or a dime at a time in dime banks holding up to $10, piggy banks and iron safes (small imitations).

We Came on the Scene of Life about the time when store-bought clothing could be afforded and we got most of ours that way except for some articles that were home-made for a few years after our arrival. There were many other boys who still wore made-over hand-me-down pants and coats. In fact even caps were made at home—tassel caps were popular then.

In this way articles of wearing apparel were assigned to each one; girls having most of their apparel home-made. The special items for each child extended to a certain place at the table, a certain chair, a certain plate, tin-cup or saucer. Many became conscious of things intended just for their own use, and made something of it, declining to eat at times because of a slight mix-up.

Pets.—Children grew up on the idea that they could have pets and they made friends with all forms of life from horses, ponies, calves and sheep, on down to

tadpoles, helgramites, minnows and fleas. What boy didn't have toads or fishworms in his pockets? Snakes, of the garden variety and turtles, too, were companions.

While rabbits, pigeons, chickens, ducks or guinea fowl were on the list, it was a boy and his dog, and a girl and a cat, that got along the best.

Dogs were scavengers as much as anything else for, aside from eating, they did little else but run around town or country-side and raise the dickens. Some dogs earned their keep by being good "cow and sheep-herders."

A dog large and strong enough to be hitched to and to pull a small wagon had plenty of friends and he got as much "fun" out of playing as did the kids.

The smart thing to do when you saw a dog apparently very much interested in a bone was just to let him entirely alone. The rule applied as in the case: "Let a sleeping dog lie."

That "Strange Feeling" of Understanding between a boy and a horse is something pretty hard to describe. "Spoiled" as we were as a youngster, we had trouble to get along with a "gentleman" pony. We blame fear on our part, for the distrust between us — the same condition existed between us and a domesticated deer. We just couldn't hit it. But we could see the deep feeling of trust between some boys and unharnessed horses that aways makes us just a little envious.

Books for Children: there were many to be bought but few rural people could or would put money into books for their children. The books in the private libraries of above-the-average adults were generally worth while—the classics, history, travel, etc.

Aside from school books children had little of their own to read; "Mother Goose" stories and "Fairy Tales" and some poetry read to them was about the extent of their "exposure" to books. The Alger and Henty books didn't hit the rural classes as hard as larger centers of population. And the funnies came in around the turn of the century with "Billy Bounce" and many others too numerous to mention.

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